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A National Day of Prayer for Peace.

For weeks requests have been pouring into the White House asking President Wilson that a special day be set aside for prayer and supplication all over this country that peace may speedily be restored among the warring nations of Europe. On August 20 the Federal Council of Churches submitted a resolution asking the President to designate a "day of united prayer in all places of public worship and in the homes of the people to ask the Supreme Ruler to intervene in such ways as His divine wisdom may approve, so as to calm the hearts of those who are filled with passion for war, dispose their minds to listen to the counsels of humanity and accept overtures for peace, and bring speedily to their distracted and distressed peoples the blessings of peace." Early in September the Philadelphia *Public Ledger* started a similar movement, which met with hearty and ready response from persons of every rank and calling. A deputation representing every religious creed came to Washington with the memorial prepared at the instance of the *Ledger*. These are but two of the many evidences of the deep national sentiment supporting this call to prayer. Very large numbers of petitions to the same end have reached the President, and as a result of the widespread desire and of his own personal inclination he issued, on the 8th of September, the following call to united prayer:

"By the President of the United States of America.

"A PROCLAMATION.

"Whereas great nations of the world have taken up arms against one another, and war now draws millions of men into battle whom the counsel of statesmen have not been able to save from the terrible sacrifice; and

"Whereas in this as in all things, it is our privilege and duty to seek counsel and succor of Almighty God, humbling ourselves before Him, confessing our weakness and our lack of any wisdom equal to these things; and

"Whereas it is the especial wish and longing of the people of the United States, in prayer and counsel and all friendliness, to serve the cause of peace:

"Therefore, I, Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States of America, do designate Sunday, the 4th day of October next, a day of prayer and supplication, and do request all God-fearing persons to repair on that day to their places of worship, there to unite their petitions to Almighty God, that, overruling the counsel of men, setting straight the things they cannot govern or alter, taking pity on the nations now in the throes of conflict, in His mercy and goodness showing a way where men can see none, He vouchsafe His children healing peace again and restore once more that concord among men and nations without which there can be neither happiness nor true friendship nor any wholesome fruit of toil or thought in the world; praying also to this end that He forgive us our sins, our

ignorance of His holy will, our wilfulness and many errors, and lead us in the paths of obedience to places of vision and to thoughts and counsels that purge and make wise.

"In witness whereof I hereunto set my hand and cause the seal of the United States to be affixed.

"Done at the city of Washington this 8th day of September in the year of Our Lord one thousand nine hundred and fourteen, and of the independence of the United States of America the one hundred and thirty-ninth.

"WOODROW WILSON.

"By the President:

"WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN,
"Secretary of State."

The Obsession of Great Armaments.

The fact that the most terrible war in history is raging immediately after a period of hopeful progress in the peace movement has led many people to inquire whether the advocates of international conciliation have justified their labors, and has led some even to question the wisdom of the traditional policy of the United States not to maintain a large army in time of peace.

It is said that existing institutions intended to settle disputes without war have wholly failed, and must in any case fail to prevent such a war as this, and, therefore, the only safety of a nation is to arm herself against her day of trial.

That the Hague Tribunal has not prevented this war is obvious; that neither it nor any court or institution now in existence could have prevented it, if the nations concerned were determined to press claims, the legality of which they would not submit to any judgment but their own, is equally obvious. No intelligent person has ever argued or thought the contrary.

One of the main objects of the peace movement has been to establish international courts. But the mere existence of a court cannot prevent a war if nations are determined to fight; all that it can do is to offer a method of settling a dispute, if the nations will agree to that method. But nations will not so agree where their demands are unlawful and unjust, so that no court would uphold them.

No one has ever claimed that either the existing court of arbitration or the proposed court of arbitral justice would absolutely prevent war. But the one does, and the other will, *tend* to prevent it by offering an infinitely better means of settling *bona fide* disputes. The permanent court of arbitration did not fail to prevent this war because of any failure to do what it was designed to do, or could do, or what any intelligent person ever expected it to do.

The original dispute between Austria-Hungary and Serbia as to the responsibility for the murder of the Austrian Crown Prince might very properly have been submitted to the court, as Serbia suggested; but the Austrian demands went far beyond this question and could not have been supported by any rule of international law or practice. Therefore, for that as well as other reasons the suggestion of arbitration was ignored.

The other nations entered into the conflict, either because they believed their treaty obligations required